Separate Category for Disabled in Census

2818. SHRI RAMCHANDRAIAH RUMANDLA : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether disabled persons are not categorized separately for data collection in the Census;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether disabled rights group are agitating for such survey; and

(d) the measures proposed to be taken to survey disabled population ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI) : (a) and (b) Data on infirmities was collected in the earlier Census of 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921 and 1931. Subsequently, due to the serious doubts expressed by the then Census Commissioners about the authenticity and quality of data collected on disabled population, the enumeration of physically handicapped persons was discontinued during 1941 Census. It was felt that questions on disabled population did not lend themselves to a census enquiry since these did not seem to provide accurate data. In subsequent Census of 1951, 1961 & 1971 the question on disabilities was not canvassed. 1981 was proclaimed as the International Year for the Disabled. On strong plea made by then Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, a question on physically handicapped was canvassed during the Houselisting Operations of 1981 Census inspite of serious reservations expressed by the then Census Commissioner on the ability of the Census to collect reliable data on this characteristic. When the results of 1981 Census were finally available, it was felt that there was considerable under enumeration of physically handicapped persons. It was also felt that the enumeration of the physically handicapped continued to be beyond the scope and capacity of Census Operations.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The matter is under examination of the Government.